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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
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RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8376  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 1508  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2391  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 1601  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 9360  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 2335  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9242  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 9723  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6358  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 3745  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 8620  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 2850  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4759  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 5820  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

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Key stories in the media:  
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Ha'aretz reported that according to security sources Prime Minister

Ehud Olmert has approved a change of route in the separation barrier east of the Green Line in the area of Modi'in Ilit. This change will take in the settlements of Nili and Na'aleh and will create two Palestinian enclaves containing about 20,000 people.

Ha'aretz quoted foreign news agencies as reporting that the US is demanding that its allies in Europe increase their economic pressure on Iran beyond the sanctions accepted last month in the UN Security Council. The agencies reported that the American call is being resisted both in Europe and in Russia.

Ha'aretz reported that the IDF intends to strike against Islamic Jihad in response to Monday's terror attack in Eilat but, decided to otherwise maintain its cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Maariv cited Minister of Defense Amir Peretz as saying in a meeting with Eilat's mayor that he ordered the IDF to enhance its activity in Eilat and its surroundings and that the issue of building a fence between Israel and Egypt will be discussed soon in the security establishment.

Ha'aretz reported GOC Central Command Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh signed a series of orders meant to step up the battle against illegal outposts. The orders were signed at the instruction of Minister of Defense Amir Peretz. According to the paper the orders include amendment of the Jordanian law, which forbids construction without permit in the West Bank and consider it a criminal offense.

All media reported that former justice minister Haim Ramon was convicted in his sexual harassment trial on Wednesday.

Yediot cited a report written by Foreign Ministry analysts indicating that opposition against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran is growing due to growing fear of a possible military attack against its nuclear devices and economic sanctions.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Egypt is trying to persuade the Palestinians to form an army that is shared by all Palestinian factions in an attempt to solve the crisis in the PA.

Leading media quoted Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani as saying to Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres that Israel should talk with Hamas.

All media reported that President Moshe Katzav has moved out of the President's Residence for the period that he is unable to fulfill his duties. The media also reported that Knesset discussions on whether to oust President Katzav will begin in two weeks and will last up to six weeks. The process can begin after the Knesset House Committee has unanimously approved the procedure.

Maariv reported that during Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres's visit to Qatar, Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani called upon Israeli students to come to study at the education complex in his capital, Doha. The paper noted that Qatar boasts several branches of leading universities and academic institutions from the United States that are attended by students from 22 countries.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (01/31): "The Israel-Egypt border is porous, for the use of both terrorists and criminals, and no Israeli community is immune to attack -- either by Katyusha rockets or by suicide bombers. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the hastily reached conclusion, that it is necessary to invest billions of shekels in a border fence, with sophisticated electronic equipment, from Eilat to Kerem Shalom, a total of 240 kilometers across desert and mountainous terrain, should be adopted."

The conservative, Independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (01/31): "As expensive as a Sinai border fence would be to build, we suspect that, as was the case with other such projects, all involved will

consider the money well spent once it is built."

Block Quotes:

#### I. "Pointless Fence"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (01/31): "The suicide bombing in Eilat on Monday was a painful reminder of a reality that has been pushed to the periphery of public debate. The three murdered citizens join the long list of victims of the confrontation with Israel that the Palestinians began in September 2000.... The Israel-Egypt border is porous, for the use of both terrorists and criminals, and no Israeli community is immune to attack -- either by Katyusha rockets or by suicide bombers. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the hastily reached conclusion, that it is necessary to invest billions of shekels in a border fence, with sophisticated electronic equipment, from Eilat to Kerem Shalom, a total of 240 kilometers across desert and mountainous terrain, should be adopted.... Even if the fence is completely successful, it will only divert the perpetrators of attacks in different directions, either over (rockets) or under (tunnels) the fence.... Overall, the Israeli security services have managed to limit the number of both attacks and casualties. They employ the proper tactics, and the proof of this is the decreasing frequency of the attacks. This does not mean that the Palestinians and Egypt -- either directly or indirectly -- have no responsibility for the bombing in Eilat. The divided Palestinian government is not trying to prevent attacks.... Egypt does not insist on exercising its sovereignty over its territory or along its borders, neither that with the Gaza Strip nor that with Israel. A diplomatic effort to demand from these parties to assume their responsibility, in addition to maintaining the intelligence and military efforts to prevent attacks will be more useful than the illusion of a costly fence."

#### II. "Fence the Border"

The conservative, Independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (01/31): "As expensive as a Sinai border fence would be to build, we suspect that, as was the case with other such projects, all involved will consider the money well spent once it is built. This particular fence, moreover, would serve multiple purposes. The border with Egypt is not only an entry way for terrorists; it is a source of rampant smuggling of goods, weapons and people.... The Egyptian border is the primary conduit for weapons and terrorists moving from Gaza to the West Bank -- where the security fence is also incomplete. As expensive as it is, then, the 'Hourglass' plan should be funded and implemented. If, as the name implies, we all know it is a matter of time, many lives might be saved and much good achieved if that time is sooner rather than later."

#### 12. Iran:

Summary:

Washington based correspondent Shmuel Rosner opined in the mass circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (01/31): "The urgent appeals of Arab rulers to Washington testify that leaders in Riyadh, Cairo and Dubai understand perfectly well a simple, agreed fact: without an American determination there will be no worthy half-back to face the Iranians."

Block Quotes:

#### "A Need for A Worthy Half-Back"

Washington based correspondent Shmuel Rosner opined in the mass circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (01/31): "Bush is captured in the pliers of American public opinion that suspects that he intends to act in Iran as he did in Iraq and Middle Eastern opinion that examines every sign of American weakness.... The Americans recognize that time is short and that so far they haven't succeeded in cracking the Iranian wall of refusal. Thus, the Europeans ... are

moving too slowly, too slack in order to produce results....  
Regarding Iran, the US also falls into the trap that describes its situation in the 21st century. On the one hand its allies are requesting that it does not act alone and take into considerations their interests and opinion. On the other hand it is obvious to everyone that eventually the responsibility for the outcome, would be written first of all to the debit of the United States. The urgent appeals of Arab rulers to Washington testify that leaders in Riyadh, Cairo and Dubai understand perfectly well a simple, agreed fact: without an American determination there will be no worthy half-back to face the Iranians."

JONES